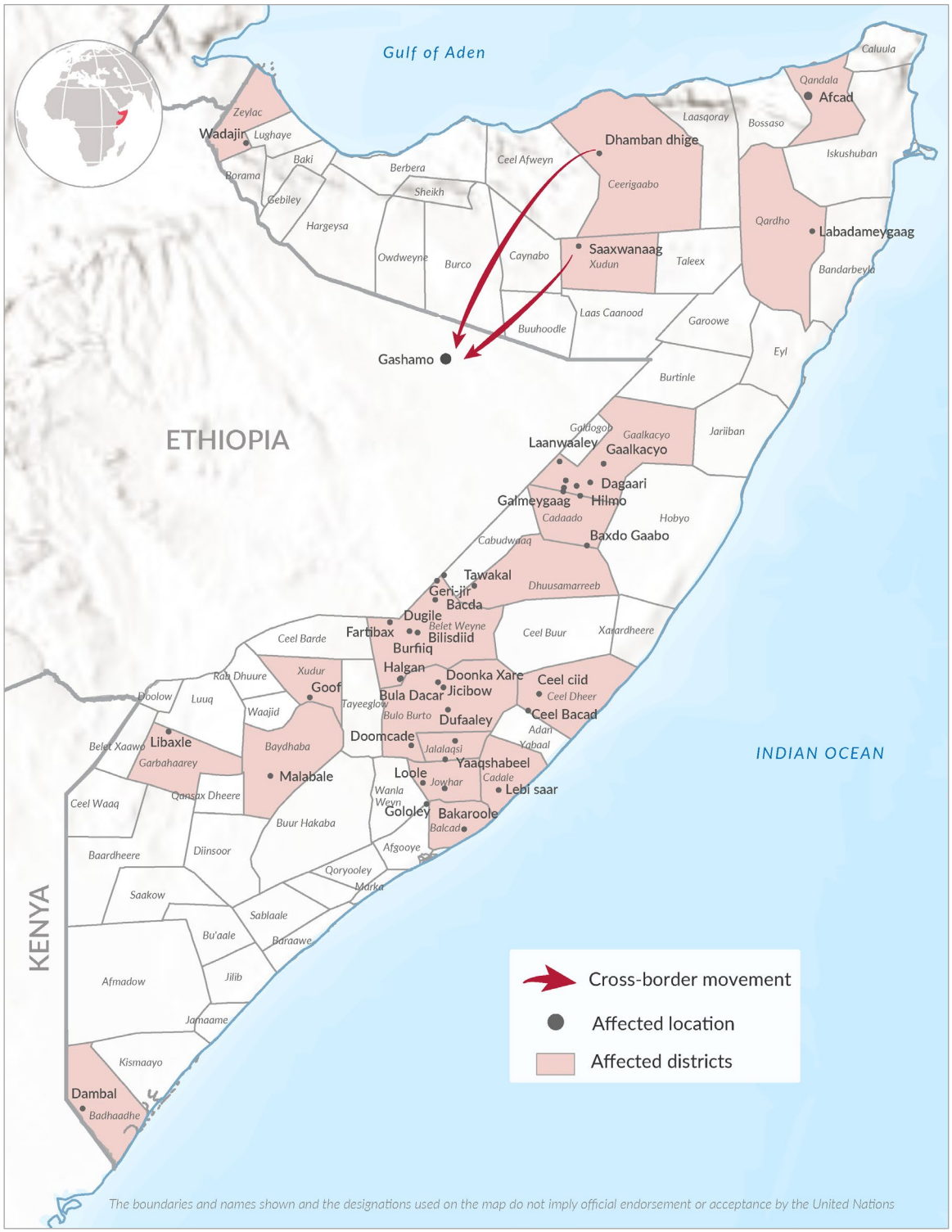
Flash Alert #8_Severe Droughts in Multiple Locations Trigger Mass Displacement of 180,000 Civilians and Cross Border Movements

Displaced Families	Displaced Individuals	Cross-border movement	Deaths	Injuries	Incident Date
29,904	180,000	1,084 households	0	0	Feb 15 -28, 2026



Background

Somalia's prolonged drought has escalated into a nationally declared emergency, significantly increasing humanitarian needs and pushing agro-pastoral communities into crisis. As water sources dry up, households are travelling long distances to access often unsafe water, worsening health conditions, food insecurity, and displacement risks. Humanitarian conditions are rapidly deteriorating in Lower Jubaland, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Mudug, Togdheer regions, and Sanaag, where many families are living in makeshift shelters or without adequate shelter, exposing them to harsh weather and protection risks. Women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and other protection concerns. Food insecurity and malnutrition remain severe, with many households eating once a day or less and livelihoods collapsing due to widespread livestock losses. The drought is severely affecting districts including Afmadow; Adale, Cadale, Buloburte, Matabaan, Jalalaqsi and Jowhar; several locations across Mudug; as well as Burao, Oodweyne, Ainabo, Oog, El-Afweyn and Garadag.

As of early March, the Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) partners documented approximately 29,904 households (around 180,000 individuals) newly displaced due to drought impacts across multiple regions. This includes 2,404 households in Afmadow, 10,500 households across Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions, 1,100 households in Mudug, and 6,000 households across the Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool regions while 1,084 households have fled to Gashamo in Ethiopia where it has been informed for the humanitarian response.

Displacement is driven by livestock loss, water scarcity, and collapsed grazing resources, forcing rural households toward urban centers. Vulnerable groups—including children, women, older persons, and persons with disabilities—face heightened protection risks, with 14,700 children and 317 persons with disabilities affected.

Despite the worsening drought, humanitarian assistance remains minimal. PSMN calls on partners and authorities to urgently scale up life-saving support, protection services, and community-based interventions.

Protection Risks

Child and Family Separation: Large-scale displacement movements have heightened the risk of child and family separation. The Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) documented 13 cases of family separation, which were referred through protection mechanisms and successfully reunified.

Forced Displacement: As drought conditions continue to deteriorate, there is a high likelihood of additional displacement from affected rural communities toward already overstretched urban areas and informal settlements. This movement is expected to further strain limited basic services, including water, shelter, health care, and sanitation, while increasing protection risks for vulnerable groups. Women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities may face heightened exposure to exploitation, violence, and family separation during displacement and in overcrowded settlement conditions. Without timely humanitarian assistance and resilience support, affected households may continue to adopt negative coping mechanisms as livelihoods and community support systems erode.

The ongoing drought in Somalia, compounded by related violence and persistent security concerns, continues to heighten the risk of people being forced to flee their homes. As livelihoods collapse and communities face increasing threats, many Somalis are left with little choice but to seek safety and resources elsewhere. These

pressures not only drive large-scale internal displacement but also push individuals and families to cross international borders, particularly into neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya, in search of protection, stability, and humanitarian support.

Limited Access to Resources, Services, and Humanitarian Access: Affected households report very limited access to humanitarian assistance, with many communities yet to receive any form of support. The lack of access to essential services and relief is heightening protection risks and pushing vulnerable households toward negative coping strategies.

Protection and Humanitarian Needs

Food Assistance: Household food sources have been decimated by crop failure and widespread livestock losses, resulting in critical food insecurity. Widespread crops and livestock losses are pushing households into acute food insecurity.

Shelter: Many displaced households are living in makeshift shelters or without adequate protection from harsh weather. Immediate provision of emergency shelters and tents is urgently required to ensure safety and dignity. Shelter solutions must be sensitive to the needs of women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Strengthening community-based shelter support and access to safe sites is critical to reduce protection risks.

WASH: Access to safe water and sanitation is critical in drought-affected displacement sites. Urgent water trucking, sustainable water points, emergency latrines, and hygiene kit distribution are needed to reduce health risks and prevent disease outbreaks, while ensuring safe access to minimize exposure to gender-based violence and other protection concerns.

Protection Services: Immediate protection support is urgently needed for displaced families facing gender-based violence, child protection violations, psychosocial distress, and heightened risks for older persons and persons with disabilities. Priority actions include protection monitoring, confidential case management and referrals, survivor-centered GBV and child protection services, support for explosive hazard survivors (EORE, IPA), and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms to safeguard safety, dignity, and rights.

Left: Drought-displaced families in Buloburte District searching for water. Right: Livestock remaining at a household in Cali-Saahid Village, Burao District, Togdheer Region, highlighting the severe impact of drought on pastoral livelihoods.

Displacement matrix

Previous Location	Arrival Location	Households
Bandiiradley, Laanwaaley	Bandiiradley	2100
Sadax Higlo, Gowlalo	Sadax Higlo	2100
Dagaari, Galmeygaag	Dagaari	1700
Hilmo, Baxdo Gaabo	Gaalkacyo	4600
Saaxwanaag, Labadameygaag	Saaxwanaag, Gaalkacyo	1600
Dufaaley and Ceel ciid	Jalalaqsi District	750
Doomcade	Jalalaqsi District	530
Afcad and Bacda	Jalalaqsi District	680
Geri-jir, Lomu and Dugile	Matabaan District	1,270
Bula Dacar and Jicibow	Bula Burde District	640
Doonka Xare and Ceel Bacad	Bula Burde District	745
Halgan and Fartibax	Bula Burde District	715
Burfiiq, Cee-cali, Bilisdiid	Baladweyne District	1,370
Haracadey	Baladweyne District	300
Gumarey, Bakaroole and Calanlay	Warshiik District	1450
Labeelow and Lebi saar	Xaaji Cali	1000
Malabale and Tawakal	Cadale District	700
Loole, Libaxle and Degyeber	Jowhar District	850
Likonley, Yaaqshabeel and Qalamay	Abdalle Birole	560
Feer Saguaro, Weeble, and Booray	Abdalle Birole	410
Dambal, Filile and Wadajir	Bulo Xaaji	420
Yaaq Dabeyl, Gololey and Soya	Janay Abdalle	1030
Dhamban dhige, Dudur sool and Goof.	**Gashamo - Eithopia**	**1,084**
Caana cade and Bali-hidaaya and .	Saraar, Bali samakab	1,300
Dhanan godan	cali sahid, Qudhac dheer	2,000
Approximately 180,000 individuals 29,904 HHs		**Total**

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
United Nations CERF Central Emergency Response Fund
Internal Displacement Solutions Fund
From the People of Japan

The PSMN (Protection & Solutions Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project that identifies and reports on displacements, as well as the protection risks and incidents driving such population movements. On behalf of UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 10 local partners across Somalia conduct data gathering—primarily through interviews with affected communities and key informants—and monitor displacement trends at strategic locations.

To request further details on displacement, please contact **SOMMOPMN@UNHCR.ORG**